



Name of Project: The Great Lakes Pension Rights Project

Name of Organization: Elder Law of Michigan
Pro Seniors, Inc. (Ohio)

Principle of Choices for Independence: Empowerment/Access to Information and Services

Description

The Administration on Aging Pension Counseling and Information program assists older Americans in accessing information about their retirement benefits and helps them to negotiate with former employers or pension plans for due compensation. The Great Lakes Pension Rights Project is one of six regional pension counseling currently being funded by AoA. The Great Lakes Pension Rights Project is empowering retirees in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Kentucky to secure and protect their retirement income by solving problems they have with pensions they have earned. Trained staff and volunteers answer questions, find lost pensions, gather information and resolve distribution issues. Retirees can talk to knowledgeable attorneys for free and get help from the team with:

- Basic advice about pension laws and pension rights;
- Information on survivor benefits, defined benefit plans, defined contribution plans and rights of divorced persons;
- Assistance resolving pension problems with private, union, corporate and government pension administrators;
- Appeals on pension decisions; and
- Information on retirement savings.

The Great Lakes Pension Rights Project is empowering older adults with information and educating them to better understand the complexities of pensions, thereby minimizing problems and speeding up solutions. Since the program's inception in 1999 approximately 3,700 retirees have been assisted, and over \$11.5 million in retirement

benefits have been secured. The project has also trained 41 law students in pension law basics and working with older adult clients. The return on investment for this program has been \$11 for each \$1 spent.

The Great Lakes Pension Rights Project is a partnership between Elder Law of Michigan, Inc., Pro Seniors, Inc. (OH), the Kentucky Access to Justice Foundation, and the SeniorLAW Center (PA), as well as a network of over 700 agencies that provide referrals.

For more information on the Great Lakes Pension Rights Project contact either Kate White at (517) 853-2375, Kwhite@elderslaw.org, or Gail Webb at (513) 458-5528, gwebb@proseniors.org.

Websites: www.elderslaw.org
www.proseniors.org